

# 2011 EXISTING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



## The Wreath Depot

<b>Owner</b>	Steve LaForge & Jim Bennett
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Floral/Gardening/Pest Control
<b>City, County</b>	Tonganoxie, Leavenworth
<b>Phone/Website</b>	(913) 845-2099/www.thewreathdepot.com
<b>Structure</b>	Corporation
<b>Began</b>	1989
<b>Employees</b>	5
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Will Katz



What is the best part about being an entrepreneur? According to Steve LaForge of The Wreath Depot, the answer is simple. Change. Along with long-time business partner Jim Bennett, change is a subject that Steve understands first-hand. They started their business in 1989 and they have seen a lot of change.

After more than a decade in business, Steve and Jim had their first catalog professionally produced and they were excited about taking the business in a new direction. The scheduled delivery date for this new catalog? September 11, 2001. Of

course, the timing couldn't have been worse, but The Wreath Depot persevered. Now, using the internet as their main sales channel, they compete for clients all over the world.

The Wreath Depot has had a relationship with the KU Small Business Development Center since the early 1990's. They have attended workshops, worked with student groups, and they have worked one-on-one with KSBDC personnel. Steve and Jim believe that the KU-KSBDC has been an invaluable resource for idea-sharing. "Look for opportunities to expand or improve every part of your business," says Steve. "Use trends, but be sure to back it up with data."

All of this change hasn't been easy for Steve and Jim. They have had to understand and master new technologies. But they both enjoy change. As owners of The Wreath Depot, Steve and Jim have done a great job managing change in their 22 years in business.



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Development Center**

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### SECRET TO SUCCESS

“Treat people the way that you would want to be treated.”  
Jim Bennett, Co-owner

